

ABOUT THE DIVISION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Division of Records Management of the City of El Paso serves to provide secure and permanent storage, as well as accurate and accessible retrieval and handling of all information generated by officers and employees of the City of El Paso for the official conduct of the City's business, and to preserve such records of historical significance for the benefit of both present and future generations.

The story of the City's records management program begins in 1989, when a group of graduate student interns from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) conducted an assessment of the individual records needs of each of the City's various departments and their record-keeping practices. Then, on January 3, 1991, the Mayor and City Council approved Ordinance Number 10367, which provided for the first uniform system for records management for the City of El Paso.

As a division of El Paso municipal government under the Municipal Clerk's Department, the records management program is administered by a professional staff of three full-time employees. Building Maintenance is provided by the City's Department of Municipal Services. Headquartered in the City's Archives & Records Center located at 617 Texas Avenue, the division now holds more than 7,600 cu. ft. of boxed records from all departments of the City, including the Mayor & Council. In addition, the Center contains a municipal archives, which holds a variety of historically significant materials relating to the history of El Paso.

As a municipal archives and records facility, it is our goal to serve the citizens and departments of the City of El Paso as a professional archives and records management facility of the highest quality. Please contact us if we may assist you.

CITY OF EL PASO ARCHIVES & RECORDS CENTER

DIVISION OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT MUNICIPAL CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

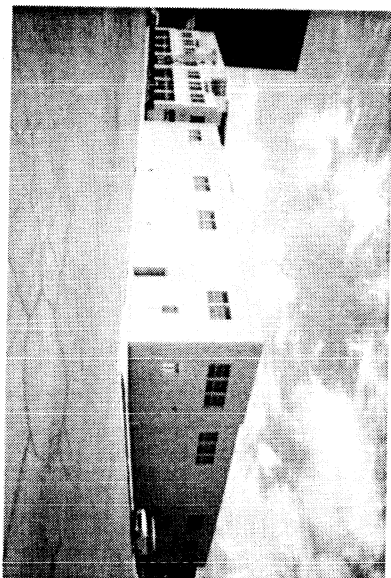
617 Texas Avenue

El Paso, Texas 79901

Telephone: (915) 351-3642

(915) 541-4127

Website: <http://www.ci.el-paso.tx.us/>

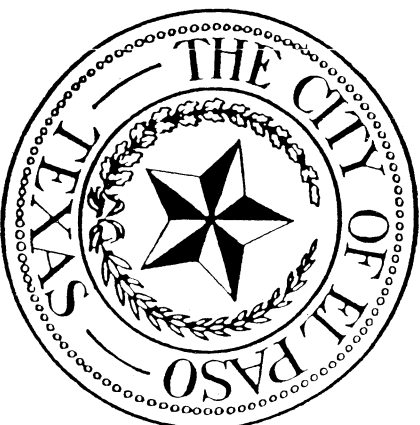


HOURS OF OPERATION:

By Appointment Only
(Closed City Holidays)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

PUBLIC RECORDS AND YOU: A GUIDE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PUBLIC RECORDS

What are Public Records?

City Ordinance #10367 defines public records as “any documents, papers, letters, memorandums, books, maps, photographs, sound or video recordings, microfilm, magnetic tapes, electronic media, or other information recording media, regardless of physical form or characteristic and regardless of whether public access to it is open or restricted, under the laws of the state, created or received, by the City of El Paso or any of its officers or employees pursuant to law, or in the transaction of public business”

What are my Department's responsibilities concerning record- keeping?

Your department should create and maintain up-to-date inventories of all records kept within the department. Your department should also ensure that records are used and maintained appropriately, and in the case of records for which confidentiality restrictions apply (personnel records, health or medical records, etc.) your department must provide adequate security and protection for these materials to prevent unwarranted access.

Do we have to keep things forever?

Not in most cases. The retention of municipal records is governed by Texas state law, and administered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. Each department also has an approved retention schedule which specifies how long a record must be kept under the law, and if (or when) each record can be destroyed. Please consult your department's schedule for specific requirements.

What forms do we have to use?

The city uses three records management forms that should be used whenever departments need to request, transfer or destroy records:

- Records Request Form (RM1)- use this form to request records that are stored at the City's Archives & Records Storage Center
- Records Transfer Form (RM2)- use this form to send inactive records to storage ("inactive" records are generally defined as those which are being accessed once a month or less).
- Records Destruction Form (RM3)- prepare this form when records have met their legal retention and can be disposed of.

To obtain copies of these forms, please contact your department's records liaison, or contact the Division of Records Management at 541-4127.

What is a Records Liaison and what do they do?

Each department head has designated a member of his or her staff to serve as a Records Liaison to help implement a records management program within the department. The Records Liaison should be someone who is thoroughly familiar with all of the records created and maintained by the department. As the main point of contact between the department and the Division of Records Management, the Records Liaison is also charged with keeping all staff members informed of changes that occur in the records management program, such as any revisions or updates to their department's retention schedules.

What are records control schedules?

Records control schedules (also known as retention schedules) are lists of the records created and maintained by each department that identify the length of time a record must be legally maintained (either in active or inactive status) prior to final disposition.

How do we dispose of unwanted or unneeded records?

Once records have met their retention period, the department needs to prepare Form RM3 (Records

Destruction Form), and then get both their department head's approval and the approval of Records Management before destroying any records. **Do not dispose of any records before contacting the Division of Records Management.** For more details, please contact the Division of Records Management.

Why do we have to contact Records Management before destroying records?

Because destroying public records before they have met their retention periods is a violation of state law, which may be punishable by fine, jail time, or both. **So if in doubt, don't throw out.** Always contact Records Management before destroying records.

How can I help to improve my Department's recordkeeping practices?

There are many things you can do to help cut down on paperwork and improve recordkeeping. Evaluate the contents of office file cabinets and storage boxes on an on-going basis; control records at the beginning by not creating new or multiple copies of forms; use a routing slip instead of making copies for everyone in the office; limit copy machine use and making double-sided copies whenever possible; discard all drafts printed out at various stages; and check office supply catalogs for products that would save space and help in filing--if additional file equipment is needed, chose those with open or lateral shelves. These are the most efficient users of space for filing purposes. And last but not least, be sure to date everything.

Where can I get more information and who can I contact for help?

The Division of Records Management is always here to serve you. If you have any questions or concerns, please give us a call at 541-4127.